University Health Council Meeting Minutes
Friday, September 29th, 2023—via Zoom
Meeting called to order by Chair Ellen Lutz

Present:
Ellen Lutz (Chair, Libraries), Betsy Cracco (Student Affairs), Zander Crowley (CNS), Katie Dixon-Gordon (PBS), Erika Hamilton (Microbiology), Jeffrey Hescock (EHS), Andrew McMahon (UHS), Lisa Minter (VASCI), Anthony Paik (Faculty Senate Secretary), Mike Pease (SPP), Pam Shea (LLL), Merin Thomas (SWAB), Joe Van Allen (CNS), Wilmore Webley (VC DEI),

1) Introduction of Health Council members

2) Meeting Minutes from 5/19/2023
-*Minutes Approved*

3) Chair Election
Ellen Lutz was nominated for the position of chair at the May 19, 2023, meeting. This nomination was seconded from the floor. Ellen Lutz was elected as chair for the 2023- 2024 academic year.

4) Campus Health Updates
Ellen announced that today is the first day of the annual UMass Flu and Covid-19 vaccine clinic. There is a mobile aspect to the clinic, visiting UMass dining halls and the Recreation Center on Thursdays, and Fridays from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM in the Campus Center. There will be a blood pressure clinic upcoming as well.

Jeff mentioned that UMass is currently only able to offer the Pfizer vaccine, but orders have been placed for more. The clinic is currently only open for UMass faculty, staff, students, and immediate family members. UMass faculty, staff, and students have been very diligent about reporting positive Covid-19 cases on rapid tests or getting tested at UHS. Numbers have been going down in the past ten days.

Questions:

Erica asked if UMass was still doing wastewater testing for Covid-19. Testing is still being done, but only every few weeks.

Wilmore asked if the data from Amherst and surrounding areas was being examined. The town of Amherst is included in the wastewater testing.

5) UMass Bloom
Tobias Baskin sent Ellen an update on his UMass Bloom project, which was presented to the Council during Spring 2023 and focuses on creating micro meadow habitats around campus. Tobias has forwarded the project to the Okanagan Charter team. He wanted to know if Health Council was interested in promoting it.

Questions:

Lisa was wondering who would be responsible for weeding in the first two years. It is proposed that managing the gardens would be a part of a class taught by Dan Benson. Betsy added that such engagements with students had worked quite well in the past, and that gardening has been mentioned many times in the conversations about future wellness on campus.

Ellen asked if there was an appropriate pathway to send projects such as UMass Bloom to the Okanagan team. Betsy clarified that since they are still in the very early stages there is not yet any established pathways.

6) Health Council Meeting Times
Ellen confirmed with the Health Council members that Friday at noon would continue to work as a regular meeting time. The members agreed, and the council will continue to meet as scheduled.

7) Tobacco Policy
Tony brought to the Council's attention a Tobacco Policy passed by the Health Council that was approved as campus policy through the Faculty Senate. The policy states that revisions must be done through the Health Council, and Tony asked the Council for their opinions on this.

Wilmore explained that at the time the policy was fairly controversial, and so it needed Faculty Senate support to be brought to the administration. At the time, the Health Council was the only body with the expertise or authority line to revise the policy. Now the policy needs to be revised to allow indigenous ceremonies involving tobacco and research conducted on tobacco, but those revisions do not necessarily need to go through the Health Council.

Jeff agreed, adding that as a campus wide policy they are better equipped to assist with implementation along with departments such as UHS.

Tony invited the Council to make suggestions or recommendations to the administration to update and revise the policy. Wilmore and Ellen agreed with this need, and Ellen plans to consider it for an upcoming agenda.

Questions:

Zander asked if the legalization of marijuana mattered on campus due to this being a federally funded institution. This is correct. As long as marijuana is outlawed federally, then it cannot be allowed on campus.

8) Future Business

A Council member anonymously asked for sexual violence to be a future topic for this academic year. Ellen recommended that the Title IX coordinator for campus be invited to speak on this topic.

Ellen plans to hold the next meeting in person, then return to Zoom, but this will be flexible depending on public health and Council preferences.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:36 PM.
Minutes prepared by Caitlyn Foster (Faculty Senate Project Assistant)